**Why an aesthetic society grows faster?**

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That was a beautiful cloudy morning. A rhythmical, well-introduced voice sounded as I entered the back lawn of Islamabad Club with a light orchestra in the background. After saying thanks to my host, I rushed into the gathering area. “You become brave and generous when you have substance about life. Art is means of communication. It is all about sharing, the essence of life. Sharing blocks insecure decision-making and allows inclusive societal progress. This is what called as an aesthetic society or aesthetic dimension of life”. He was Jamal Shah, a veteran actor, painter, and teacher of art as well.

The lines reminded me of a debate expounding the role of aesthetics in public affairs recorded by Will Durant in his commentary: The History of Western Philosophy. Plato insisted (The Republic; a Socratic dialogue authored around 375 B) that the artists deviate from reality and should not be given responsible positions in social structure. Plato argues art is a copy of a copy – since reality is an imitation of the Form and art is then an imitation of reality. Forms are perfect metaphysical constructs, he defined.

The notion was contested by his own student, Aristotle. He envisaged a defining role of art in carving the foundations of human society. The crux of his argument is: it is interesting to see life how it is, but it is even more interesting to see life how it can be. He maintains that creative dispensation of human instincts is a source of catharsis, or a purgation, that helps human emotions to get rid of negativity. It is god’s profession.

The French philosopher Henri de Saint-Simon (1820) seconds Plato “the correct decisions can only be the result of scientific demonstrations, absolutely independent of all human will”. Many policy-theorists follow the approach of Evidence-Based Policymaking. However, the policy cycle is not perfectly empirical to be predicted like a scientific method as assumed in the literature. It is a complex process receiving enforcements emanating from varying human behaviors during every step. The role of creativity in policymaking starts from the very outset during the stage of agenda-setting.

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Agenda setting is the identification of a social need acknowledged as a policy matter for proper formulation and execution. Power of expression plays vital role in prioritizing social needs for recognition. Technology has provided a tremendous impetus to the power of expression. Fast connectivity, social and electronic media have placed the importance of expression to next levels. Creative tools, transcripts, and visual arts are used by artists to intuitively elaborate the dimensions of a social reality recognized as a substrate for policy fabrication.

Dr. Jennifer Harper, the ex-Director of Policy, Strategy, and International with core responsibility for the National Research and Innovation Strategy with the European Union, contends that creativity is an integral component of foresight process-in-the-making. The designers and implementers of policy use intuition to generate capacities to deal with alternative and fast-changing contexts. “Creative foresights” in policymaking can occur at multiple levels, from design to implementation. “The emerging globalizing learning economy is increasing the need for creativity in foresight, in response to a highly dynamic macro and microeconomic environment”, she adds.

Art produces a third dimension in the scope of two conflicting arguments and provides space to build a new frame for re-evaluating a social reality. Groups acquire psychological ownership for their opinions. Art delicately maneuvers participants using their emotional faculty instead of their inference to find an intersecting space between policy conflicts. It lubricates the social machine, ensures smooth function by improving the quality of human interaction.

An aesthetic comprehension of life is not a luxury for highly polarized communities, rather it is an important tool to attain emotional stability. “Introduced into the philosophical lexicon during the Eighteenth Century, the term ‘aesthetic’ has come to be used to designate, among other things, a kind of object, a kind of judgment, a kind of attitude, a kind of experience, and a kind of value”, that interplays with human’s sense of pleasure and beauty, defined by the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

A more organized effort is required in polarized societies to appreciate this specific dimension in society. It is important to teach people that reality is a relative entity. Vagueness is the strength of nature and art. An aesthetic conviction is profoundly embedded in human instincts. The sense of absoluteness produces intolerance. The political history of mankind has witnessed the worst manifestations of intolerance resulted from absolute socio-religious convictions.

An aesthetic argument in form of poetry, painting, story, drama, sculpture, or music, validates itself within the limits of decency. Intuition unveils the human genius in all subjects of knowledge. Mathematics and Physics are no exception to it. It applies the higher faculty to process a policy conflict, generates a third dimension, reframes the reality, and finds the solution. Solution and problem cannot coexist in the same frame of reference as mostly followed in conflict-driven communities.

Sharing is the natural consequence of art. An artist defies controlled information. He absorbs, creates, and disseminates. He operates social reality without fearing the immensity of contradiction. After becoming the master or the victim of his own ecstasy, he starts a dialogue devoid of “vested interest”. Sharing is the basis for inclusive and secure decision-making. Inclusivity makes policymaking more organic and participative in nature. Therefore, an aesthetic society shows collective progress. It is more stable and caring. An aesthetic society relies on emotional intelligence and cooperation, rather than coercion and regulation.

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